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## Modern Developments in Education and Their Significance

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When the executive of the Public School Teachers' Association of Perth did me the honor to ask me to give a paper on some educational topic of interest to the Association as a whole, it occurred to me that I had heard discussed a year ago in the educational section of the Woman's International Congress, held at Toronto University, certain phases of modern education, which widened considerably my educational horizon, and which, I hope, may not be without interest and profit for this Association.

It was probably as much curiosity to see and hear representative women from every country in Europe, as desire to be instructed, which induced me to wander when the thermometer stood at eighty, into the lecture room, over the door of which was hung a card, pointing the way to the educational section of the Woman's International Congress. I certainly saw what I went to see, for there were representatives from England, Norway and Sweden, Holland and Belgium, Russia and Austria, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, France and Spain, and all of them spoke very comprehensible English, though with a decidedly foreign accent. This, however, did not seem to disturb

them in the least. They apparently had no idea that they might be expected to speak a foreign language like a native.

I heard, however, what I had not expected to hear, i.e., education discussed entirely from the social and industrial standpoint, instead of from the academic, with which we are all so familiar. During the six days I attended I did not hear one discussion on the time-honored subjects of Arithmetic and Spelling, History and Geography, I found myself in quite a different atmosphere from that of the ordinary educational gathering. The topics under discussion were not those usually associated with the official hours nine to four, five days a week, but covered, one might say, every hour of the child's life, at least of his waking life, from infancy to maturity.

The supporters of the Creche System described social conditions, which made it absolutely necessary for a considerable percentage of mothers to become wage-earners. As a rule the speakers deplored the necessity for it, but they all agreed that conditions had to be dealt with as they were and consequently the only way to save for the nation a large percentage of its citizens was to estab-

lish day nurseries supervised by women, specially trained in the care of children. Such a system not only saved the children but incidentally reacted on the mothers, who, coming in contact with institutions of that kind, must necessarily get higher ideals of child-rearing.

Next came the kindergartners with their plea for the children, too old for the day-nursery, and not yet ready for the ordinary Elementary School. They claimed that thousands of children grew up without knowing what it meant to play. As a consequence intellect was deadened, and the moral sense perverted. Between the ages of four and seven, there was a great waste of childlife which properly equipped kindergartens could develop into good citizens for the state. One enthusiast who had been instrumental in the organization of a combined Creche and Kindergarten System in the slums, claimed that the words of an eminent Catholic Divine:—"Give me the children up to seven years of age and I care not where they go in after life, they will always remain true to the church,—could be applied with equal force to a combined Creche and Kindergarten system. Children who grew up under the influence of Kindergarten ideals, until the age of seven, never lost them in after life.

The educational value of supervision of leisure hours was another much discussed subject. The supervised play-ground is an educational effort made in response to such criticism as the following:—"The annual report of the chief of police states that an alarming proportion

of the criminal cases is due to boys and girls of school age and to young men and women under twenty. It is hardly conceivable that such a state of things could exist, were the teachers doing all they could, and might do, to prevent crime by moulding the character of their pupils." It did not seem to occur to that chief of police, and I might include many other good people, that it was hardly reasonable to expect teachers to counteract in five hours a day, all the possible evil pupils might learn in the other nineteen, not to mention the fact that before the day of kindergartens, pupils never entered school till six or seven years of age, the most impressionable period of their lives.

There is no doubt that the facts were true which that chief of police furnished, but every teacher knows that his conclusions were most untrue. The fault lies, not in the laxity of teachers, but in the fact, that outside of the official hours, nine to four, the larger proportion of pupils in towns and cities are under no supervision whatever. Every thoughtful observer knows that the children of today, in their leisure hours, are not under the supervision of their parents but in the street or in places of amusement outside of the home and some of them very questionable. What the home does not, and in many cases cannot do, the state must do, if she is to have citizens worthy of the name. Hence municipalities are taking up the question of supervision of children in leisure hours. In every community a good share of the equipment is at hand. Every school building, playground, gymnasium, manual





training workshop and domestic science kitchen should be at the disposal of children every afternoon and evening every day in the week, of course, under skilled supervision.

In this way only will municipalities get full value for money invested in school grounds, buildings and their equipment. Thus only will children within the limits of towns and cities get that training through playground and recreative work which is the birthright of every child.

From the literature on the subject, freely distributed, I picked up two condensed reports of work done along this line in Germany and the United States. From these I have culled a few points of interest.

In every large city in the German Empire are established, what freely translated might be called, "safe-guards for boys." After four o'clock boys of school age are received in these institutions. From five to six is the recreation period in playground, gymnasium or manual training workshop. This is followed by a free lunch. At seven they begin to prepare home-work under the supervision of teachers and at 8.30 they are sent home. A small fee is asked in order to remove the stigma of charity. So popular have these institutions become that application for admission is fourfold greater than the number that can be accommodated. It is significant that Germany, the stronghold of parental authority and of the feminine ideal of "the three K's, children, kitchen, church," should find it advisable to supplement individual motherhood with state parenthood. Institutions of this kind

might be a more reliable way of keeping children off the street than the ringing of the curfew bell, and a happy solution of the much-vexed question of home-work.

In the report on this class of work in New York city the term "Recreation Centres" was used to include varied lines of work such as supervised playgrounds, workshops, domestic science kitchens, gymnasiums, literary clubs, libraries and study-rooms. These last are intended for children whose home surroundings are unfavorable for study and who wish to have assistance in their home-work. A special feature of the New York Recreation System is the supervised evening playground for day workers. On the roofs of eleven large schools supervised evening playgrounds have been opened. Good bands furnish music, and folk-dancing is the favorite pastime. Until ten o'clock an orderly throng come and go, dance and promenade, chat and laugh. A few statistics will show what headway the supervised playground and recreative work system has made on this continent. The Inspector of the New York City Schools reports that in 1908 the 107 playgrounds opened proved inadequate and the Board of Estimates appropriated \$50,000 more to extend the work. One hundred and thirty-nine additional sites were selected and teachers assigned to them. In Toronto the Chief Inspector reports that this year ten supervised playgrounds were opened, seven under the direction of the Board of Education, two under the direction of the Toronto Playground Association and one under the

direction of the City Council. In August of this year I visited one of the Toronto supervised playgrounds. In the centre of the grounds stood a two-roomed building with verandas and seats, chiefly for the accommodation of mothers with their infants. In one corner little boys and girls sat on sand heaps, too absorbed even to glance at visitors; in another they followed each other rapidly down a polished slide. All kinds of gymnastic appliances were in evidence for the older boys who were in a separate yard in charge of a male teacher. How delighted our grandmothers would have been to see rows of girls sitting demurely on benches under the trees stitching busily with all kinds of bright wools.

As I watched the throng of children all happy and all healthfully busy I reflected, that Theodore Roosevelt had not over-estimated the power for good of supervised playgrounds when he said: "They are the greatest civic achievement the world has ever known. Vileness cannot grow if healthful activities are constantly striking its roots, and every blow lessens the power of disseminating poison through the body politic."

The Vocational School is yet another recent development in education. The use of the word vocational, as an educational term, indicates the destined or appropriate employment for which nature and circumstances have specially fitted an individual. Experience has demonstrated that not all children who complete the elementary course maintain themselves creditably in High School work. Some have not the taste and the intel-

lectual stamina necessary for the higher course. Consequently a distinction ought to be made between those who are well fitted to do purely academic work and those whose tastes are distinctly industrial. Schools for this latter class of pupils are called Vocational Schools. They are open to all boys and girls who are able to pass a very simple examination in Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. Upon admission pupils are placed on probation five months, during which time their fitness for the work attempted is tested. While the work in Vocational Schools is mainly industrial there is also an academic side. Such subjects as mathematics, literature, geography and history are correlated with the work done in the shops. Geneva, Switzerland, has made a specialty of Vocational Schools. They have there in actual operation schools with facilities for horticulture, agriculture, watchmaking, fine arts, carpentry and lathe work, forge work, plumbing and masonry. For girls the course in the schools of domestic science includes cooking, laundry, general housework, plain sewing, the making of garments, including dress-making, millinery, embroidery, drawing and designing.

The following clipping from a local paper indicates that the idea of giving children industrial training is making headway on this continent:— "A plan to establish a dress-making institute in connection with Chicago's Public School system will come up at a dinner of the dressmakers of the city. The superintendent of the schools of Chicago, Ella F. Young, and representatives of the Chicago





Association of Commerce will discuss the matter. It is said that dressmaking schools in Boston and New York have provided much needed assistance to the makers of women's apparel."

That we in Canada are waking up to the necessity for vocational training is evidenced by the fact that the Ontario Government recently sent the Superintendent of Education to investigate and report on Technical Education in Europe. The Dominion Government also has appointed a commission which at present is visiting industrial centres in Ontario in order to discuss with municipal bodies the possibilities of Technical Education. It is to be hoped that the movement may result in something practical being done for the boys and girls who are counted dull because they have no aptitude for a purely academic training. Many of those so-called dull pupils if placed in a suitable industrial environment might become captains of industry.

The object of these schools is not to turn out finished journeymen, mechanics, cooks and dressmakers, but to give children, who are fitted by nature for industrial pursuits, a training which will lead them to seek industrial and mechanical occupations and thus enable them to abbreviate considerably the period of apprenticeship.

In Germany, quite often, the vocational training is obtained in regular workshops the masters of which are obliged by law to allow their apprentices a stated number of hours a day to attend classes, bearing upon the literary side of their work.

A system of vocational schools in populous centres would prevent the frightful waste, economic and intellectual, of setting children at work, for which they are unfitted, and in time would no doubt raise the standard of skill and ethics among those who devote their lives to mechanical and industrial pursuits.

The Inspector of New York schools recommends that the Board of Education organize a vocation or employment bureau of which the special field of labor would be, to bring to the attention of employers of labor, the various kinds of training given in the schools, and to ascertain from teachers, and the young people themselves, the kind of work for which each is best fitted. The existence of such a bureau would be of invaluable aid to parents who are at a loss to know how best to place their children in life.

In this connection it may be of interest to know that a beginning in the vocational direction has been made in Stratford. Several pupils in attendance at present are devoting the greater part of their time to practical work in the manual training workshop, and correlating with their practical work the English and mathematics of the ordinary course.

Time will not permit me to do more than barely mention other recent developments in education:—Vacation Schools for those who have failed only on one or two subjects, Parental Schools for incorrigible truants and Open Air Schools for sickly children.

The most note-worthy open air

school is the Forest school at Charlottenburg. There are received those children from Berlin, who on account of disease are unable to make satisfactory progress in the ordinary school. During the summer season the special trolley leaves Berlin at 7.30 a.m. and in the winter thirty minutes later. Breakfast is served to the children at 8.30. After this one half of the children attend school till 10.30, the other half from 10.30 till 12.30. When not at lessons the children play or work in the garden or workshop. After dinner each child must rest for one hour and a half in a small sized steamer-chair out-of-doors. Then come gymnastics, bath and lunch. The trip home is made before dark. This school has been in existence since 1904. Some effort along this line has been made in London, England, and a similar school was opened in Boston in 1908.

This rapid survey of the developments in modern education illustrates, how gradually, and one might say almost instinctively, the state is extending its influence educationally over the lives of its future citizens. The purely academic system of education, limited to five hours a day between the ages of seven and fourteen, has struck its roots downward so as to reach the infant in Crèche and Kindergarten and has grown upward so as to include through recreation centres and evening schools of various kinds, the adult already engaged in the struggle for existence. Moreover, it has broadened in the centre into Vocational School Open Air and Parental Schools, with their accompaniment of supervised playgrounds

workshops and gymnasiums. Thus the state is practically throwing educational safe-guards about its citizens from earliest infancy to maturity. This is the bare fact. What is its inner significance? Why is the state instinctively extending its influence over a domain, in which a few generations ago, parents had undisputed sway? The criticism, that it is because parents are becoming more and more neglectful of their home-duties, has been repeated so often that it has come to be accepted without challenge. Certainly it is true that children in their leisure hours are not in their homes under the supervision of parents. The cause, however, is to be attributed more to the organization of the industrial and social world than to growing indifference on the part of parents. Only a generation or so ago towns and cities were crowded with thousands of tradesmen and artisans who had their own home-workshops, in which their wives, sons and daughters found employment. To-day machine work has absorbed the many little home industries and huge factories with steam engines and tall chimney-stacks, perform the work which formerly was done in the individual homes by the members of one family. Parents in this age of machine and factory-labor are working outside of the home under high pressure, a long working-day, and so are compelled to leave their children unattended. Men, and women, too, by the thousands, are working outside of their homes in factories for long hours under conditions which makes life a great battle for subsistence, and robs them,





as parents, of the time and vitality necessary to supervise and train their children. Social conditions, such as these, gives rise to problems with regard to the training of children of which the parents of a few generations ago had not the slightest idea and which cannot be solved by their methods. The spirit of the age is towards co-operation. This is true not only of our work, but also of our amusements. The old ideal of home life with its placid evening spent reading aloud an attractive book, while mother and daughters kept their hands busy with needlework, is just as much out of harmony with the spirit of today as the old home-industries are with the co-operative factory. Men and women who work all day together wish to play together. Co-operation in amusement is the natural outcome of co-operation in work. This is as true of children in the school as it is of men and women in the workshop. And should it not be so? The child who has not learned to co-operate with his school-mates in work and in play, will, later on, be at a serious disadvantage in the practical affairs of life. This is the age of the man or woman who can do and co-operate, not of the isolated worker.

I do not wish to be understood as

defending the present social conditions. I merely wish to say we must deal with conditions as they are. We cannot revive the home-environment of our great-grandmother's time any more than we can revive the industrial conditions of that age. With the great change in industrial organization has necessarily come a change in home influence and environment. Social life for the mass of children to-day means the social life of the community in which they live, not of the individual family to which they belong by the accident of birth. If this be so, if the social life of the community is of necessity gradually replacing the social life of the individual home, just as the co-operative factory has replaced the individual workshop, then it is only wisdom, on the part of parents and state, to co-operate in order to counteract the evils resulting from the loss of home influence, by throwing about the children social safeguards. What form these social safeguards shall take is essentially an educational problem and as such must be dealt with largely by educators. Recent developments in education are indicating their general trend but it remains for this and succeeding generations of teachers to determine their ultimate form.